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February 8, 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Child Passenger Safety Week is opportunity to ensure children are riding safely

Roses are red, violets are blue, this Valentine's Day show your children how much they mean to you - by ensuring they are always properly restrained in a child safety seat or safety belt when riding in a vehicle.

National Child Passenger Safety Week is Feb. 11-17, and the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is urging parents and caregivers to make sure their child safety seat is installed correctly.

"There are several common mistakes parents and caregivers make when installing child safety seats," said Michael L. Prince, division director of OHSP. "Visiting child safety seat check events or making an appointment with a technician are excellent ways to ensure their child is riding safely."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the three most common mistakes made in installing a child safety seat are: not attaching the seat correctly and tightly to the vehicle, not fastening the harness tightly enough, and not using the chest clip correctly.

OHSP is providing funding to law enforcement agencies for overtime enforcement of child passenger safety laws and to host child safety seat events across the state. Barry, Cass, Clinton, Kalamazoo, Kent, Isabella, Livingston, Marquette, Mason, Montcalm, Muskegon and Wayne counties are participating.

Michigan law requires all children under age 4 to ride in an approved child safety seat and all passengers 15 and younger to be buckled up in all seating positions. Booster seats are recommended for children over age 4, until they reach 4'9" in height.

Nationally, more than 7,500 children have been saved by the proper use of child restraints since 1975, according to NHTSA. Yet, motor vehicle crashes remain the No. 1 killer of children ages 0 to 15 in Michigan. Statewide, 16 children ages 0-8 died and nearly 2,300 were injured in motor vehicle crashes in 2005.

According to a 2005 survey conducted by Wayne State University, 79.7 percent of children ages 3 and under ride in child safety seats in Michigan. A 2005 University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute study showed that less than 9 percent of children ages 4 to 8 are riding in booster seats.

Information about local child safety seat check events and child safety seat technicians can be found by visiting www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

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